7:Munro & Seligman D. E-4. 5 (ca. 1900-1942) 1963
AB6 Ainu AB6

[304] [789] does not seem out of place here. The leading motive actuating women who performed and underwent a long series of far from painless operations was that tattooing, of the lips at least, was an essential preliminary to marriage. It was usual to begin the process at or before puberty on a spot on the upper lip, and to extend it gradually, the lips being usually finished by about the age of 18. Arms were often finished at about 20 and the hands later, sometimes after marriage. Arms and hands were supposed to [836] be finished before the birth of the first child. Pre-marital sexual relations were strictly prohibited, and the completion of the tattoo- [881] ing indicated that a girl was ready for marriage and motherhood. It does not appear that the change was marked by any rite.[1]

[773] But though tattooing (*manoko shiri uoshmari*) had not within living memory been backed by any religious observance, its use was warranted by myth attributing its origin to a supernatural being, either Kamui Fuchi or A-e-oina Kamui. There are also mythical tales relating how knowledge of it was received or stolen from the Koropok-un-guru.

[824] In preparation for tattooing, bark of the ash-tree (*iwa-ni*) or [386] sometimes the spindle-wood (*komke-ni*) was cut into small pieces and boiled, producing an infusion of a dark greenish colour. This did not affect the colour of the tattooing, which was done with soot (*pash*) from birch bark. The bark was lighted under the pot and it deposited a fine soot (*supash*). The infusion (*nire*) was applied three times, before the incisions, immediately after and when the soot had been lightly rubbed in. It was supposed to be healing and perhaps also to fix the pigment.

The operator did not copy from a pattern, nor did she first paint the design on the skin. She began with tiny incisions and extended them in repeated operations. Tekatte Fuchi says that the tattooing of face and forearms could be completed in about two years, but [622] that forearms were usually done at intervals extending up to ten [554] years. The daughter of a chief was supposed to finish earlier, either to set an example or to exert a magical influence on the welfare of the village.

[412] It is many years since obsidian flakes were used, though their use probably outlasted the general neolithic culture. More recently a small knife with a razor edge has been employed. Blood was

[174] [1] From this it would appear that there was a long period between puberty and marriage but Munro has given no further information.—B.Z.S.